

## RUSSIA AND THE WEST IN IRAN

Iran was not a member of allied and associated nations. Nonetheless, the Iranian delegation formulated far-reaching demands, in which the salient points were the annulment of all foreign concessions; the abolition of capitulations; compensation for wartime damages perpetrated on Iranian territory; and the inclusion within the boundaries of Iran of Transcaspia, Merv, and Khiva up to the Oxus River, of several districts in the Caucasus, including Nakhichevan, and of the Kurdish area of Mesopotamia as far as Euphrates.<sup>4</sup> These claims were ignored, largely owing to British unwillingness to permit Iranian participation in the Peace Conference. The point to remember is that these Iranian demands were directed mainly against what could be termed "Russian territorial integrity." Iran, to be sure, was historically right when she claimed the Caucasian and Transcaspian districts. They had been, truly enough, wrested from her by Russia, mostly during the nineteenth century, and there was no valid reason why these Moslem areas should belong to Russia rather than to Mohammedan Iran. Yet the Iranian element among the native populations was insignificant, and in 1919 the claim could hardly be based on the principle of self-determination. If anything, these regions could be contemplated as independent political units, but not as Iranian appanages.

These acts of the Iranian government, which certainly could not please Russia, did not divert her from a determined policy to establish diplomatic relations with Teheran and to pose as Iran's disinterested and anti-imperialist friend. Negotiations between the two governments took place in the course of 1920 and resulted in re-

ciprocal diplomatic recognition. On November 28, 1920, Theodore A. Rothstein was appointed Soviet Ambassador to Iran. Before he arrived in Teheran in the spring of 1921, the Iranian representative in Moscow signed with the Soviet government, on February 26, 1921, a treaty that put relations between the two countries on a normal footing. The treaty was characteristic of early Soviet diplomatic instruments. It blended in an ingenious way concrete political provisions with propaganda destined to reverberate throughout the Orient. Article II of the treaty declared:

4 For details see *Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States* (The Paris Peace Conference, 1919), I, 263; also Nicolson, *op. cit.*, p 135.